



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
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December 2006



Photo courtesy of Bill Boynton, N.H. Department of Transportation

PORTSMOUTH BRIDGE RETURNS TO SERVICE – After more than six weeks out of action, the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge was returned to service on December 15th. The span, which carries Route 1A traffic over the Piscataqua River between Portsmouth and Kittery, Maine, was knocked out on October 28th due to an electrical malfunction. The bridge deck was raised using auxiliary power to permit marine traffic through, but that blocked road traffic, forcing vehicles to use the two other Piscataqua River bridges. The detour also affected one evacuation route for Seabrook Station. An initial evaluation by New Hampshire and Maine DOT engineers determined that the bridge would be out of action for months because a special cable would have to be manufactured to replace a damaged one. Instead, Maine DOT located a cable with the correct specifications and it was installed.

Divers are working this week to secure and protect the replacement cable at the bottom of the river channel, prompting restrictions on when the bridge can be opened for marine traffic. In addition, road work is being done around the bridge, requiring lane changes and one-way traffic. The bridge is expected to be returned to normal service on December 24th.

DBHRT ASSISTS DURING PORTSMOUTH HOLIDAY TRAGEDY – More than 25 members of New Hampshire’s Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT) provided grief counseling and critical incident stress debriefings following the death of a Cub Scout December 2nd during a holiday parade in Portsmouth. Nine-year-old Thomas Fogarty was riding on a Cub Scout float when he apparently fell off and was crushed by the float. The boy was a student at Greenland Central School. DBHRT volunteers assisted school district personnel in counseling students and set up a family assistance center, to help parents and their children cope with the death of a schoolmate. Critical incident stress debriefing sessions were provided to faculty, parents and children. DBHRT members continued to follow up on the incident for two weeks.

Public safety organizations can reach DBHRT 24 hours a day by calling HSEM at 1-800-852-3792.

PELHAM EXERCISE SETS UP CLINIC – Emergency and public health personnel in Pelham demonstrated that they can set up an emergency clinic to provide vaccinations or treatment in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. The exercise, on Saturday, December 2nd, involved setting up a Point of Distribution, or POD, at St. Patrick’s Church. Since there was no actual disease outbreak, nurses administered conventional flu shots – 175 to members of the general public and another dozen to clinic staff. Taking part in the exercise were Pelham police, fire and emergency medical personnel, members of the Pelham Citizen’s Emergency Response Team (CERT), members of the N.H. Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team and personnel from N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

FEMA REGION I CONDUCTS WINTER STORM EXERCISE – New England was hit with a major winter storm on December 12th, although with bright sunshine and temperatures near 50 in New Hampshire that day, most people probably didn’t notice. The storm existed only in the scenario of a regional exercise conducted by FEMA Region I and personnel from state emergency management agencies. The exercise included decision-making on the part of management staff, communications checks and public information procedures. In New Hampshire, HSEM personnel trained on the WEB EOC system, a computer program which is being used to manage EOC operations. The exercise was the first such regional effort ordered by Region I Director Art Cleaves to improve coordination among emergency management agencies in New England.

NUCLEAR PLANT EMERGENCY CALENDARS BEING DISTRIBUTED –

Emergency public information calendars for the Seabrook Station and Vermont Yankee emergency planning zones (EPZ) are being distributed at the end of December. A copy of the appropriate calendar is being mailed to each residential and business address in the two EPZs, with additional copies provided to schools, health care facilities and other institutions. Emergency management directors in the EPZs are being provided with 200 copies. Additional copies are available by calling HSEM at 1-800-852-3792. Local emergency management directors may also request extra copies from their field representatives.

HSEM SUPPORTS VERMONT YANKEE EXERCISE – N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management personnel from Operations, Technological Hazards and Public Information took part in a security exercise at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant on December 13th. The exercise, which was based on a security threat scenario, was primarily for utility personnel and did not involve local emergency management in the VY Emergency Planning Zone. Also participating at the VY Emergency Operations Facility were FBI special agents from the Albany, N.Y., office. The FBI has automatic jurisdiction over any actual or suspected terrorist incident. Vermont and New Hampshire State Police also supported the exercise.

FINANCIAL AID STILL NEEDED BY FLOOD VICTIMS – The Mother's Day flood may seem a long way back, but there are still flood victims in need of financial assistance. Governor Lynch last fall directed HSEM to determine what the unmet needs were and agency personnel found about 200 households still needing aid of some kind, with 25 still out of their homes and living in makeshift arrangements. The N.H. Statewide Disaster Recovery Steering Committee has been raising private contributions and held a reception at the Grappone Center in Concord on December 14th. About \$45,000 has been raised so far. Tax deductible contributions may be sent to the N.H. Disaster Recovery Fund, c/o State Treasurer, State House Annex, 25 Capital Street, Concord 03301.

Happy Holidays from everyone at
N.H. Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

